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INDIVIDUALISM
AND
SOCIALISM.

BEING THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS TO THE CIVIL
SOCIETY OF GLASGOW

BY

EDWARD CAIRD, LL.D., D.C.L.

MASTER OF HALLIOT COLLEGE, GLASGOW

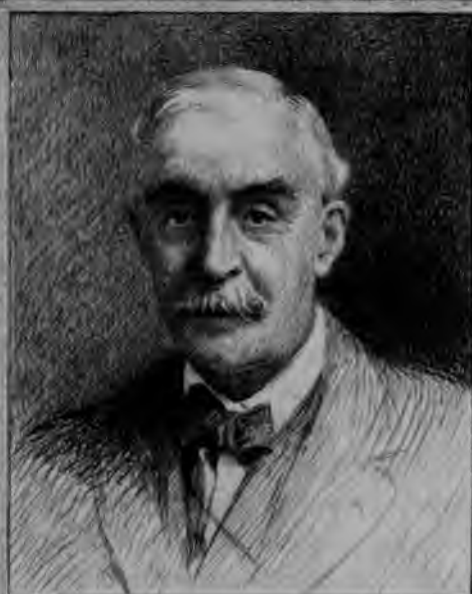
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GLASGOW

JAMES MACLEHOSE AND SONS

Publishers to the University

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INDIVIDUALISM AND SOCIALISM

BEING THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS TO THE CIVIC
SOCIETY OF GLASGOW

BY
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MASTER OF BALLIOL COLLEGE, OXFORD

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The Present State of the Controversy between Individualism and Socialism.

As an old citizen of Glasgow, whose life was for many years bound up with its great University, I count it no little honour to give the opening address to its new Civic Society. Glasgow, as any one may know who will turn over the pages of the magnificent record of civic progress published by Sir James Bell,¹ is undoubtedly one of the cities which stand in the front rank of municipal achievement, one of those cities which have realized most clearly what municipal organization can do to improve the external conditions of life for its citizens. Owing to its situation, its climate, the extent of its (trade and manufactures) and (the consequent great influx and increase of population within its boundaries) it has had early to face many of the most serious difficulties as to the safety, the health, the economic and the social welfare of the people, which beset modern communities. It has had to consider, not as a matter of theory but as a pressing practical necessity, the great problem how the community can interfere with the life of individuals so as to strengthen and develop their energies, and not to weaken or pauperize

¹ *Glasgow, its Municipal Organisation and Administration.* By Sir James Bell, Bart., and James Paton, F.L.S. Glasgow: James MacLehose & Sons.

them. And if it has not discovered any general solution of this problem—as who has discovered such a solution?—yet I think it is not doubted by many that the steps it has so far taken have been judicious, and that none of them will need to be retracted or reversed. There are some for whose impatience progress has seemed far too slow, and many who think that we have as yet dealt only with the first and more obvious phases of the difficulty. But no one who really appreciates the difficulty would wish that the gradual tentative and experimental methods which have hitherto guided the advance of the city in these matters should be changed for a bolder spirit of innovation. On the contrary, men are coming to see more and more clearly that there is no royal road to social welfare, no simple “open sesame” ✓ which will enable us to unlock all the complex and intricate problems of modern life. Man is after all the most puzzling of beings to himself, and the question what effect any institution or any measure to relieve his wants or draw forth his powers, any plan for helping, educating, or giving even amusement to him, will have upon a class or community of men, whether it will really aid or hinder them in the long run, is not to be settled except by the most careful watching of experience and the most thorough analysis of it and reflexion upon its bearings.

Every one who has given himself to any kind of scientific investigation knows how difficult it is to grasp the full meaning of a body of facts, to see all their aspects and to combine them in one view. Scientific men are constantly tempted to theorize on insufficient data, to make things simpler than they are. They have,

therefore, to train themselves to doubt and question every explanation that suggests itself to them, and to accept none, till they have tried their utmost to find objections to it. In the far more complex problems of human life, this necessity is still more pressing, for the temptations to one-sidedness are much greater. Every one of us in the great division of labour in modern life has been learning—one might almost say, has been carefully teaching himself—to be *one-sided*, to look at the facts of experience under one light, and to turn away his eyes from their other aspects. Even a Shakspeare could complain that his nature was “subdued to what it worked in like the dyer’s hand.” And how is it with ordinary men? Every one knows that the class to which he belongs has a strong bias in one direction, or if he has not imagination enough to see this, and thinks the views of his own class quite just and unprejudiced, he can at any rate see very clearly that every other class has such a bias. And if we chance to find ourselves in a society quite different from our own, we are ready to wonder how narrow and prejudiced it is. Take an assemblage of the average men of any profession or trade, of average clergymen, average lawyers, average schoolmasters or academic teachers, average employers of labour, or average artizans; take any class you like, and you will find they persistently repeat to each other certain views of life till it becomes difficult for them to conceive that other views could honestly be held by any one.

Now, it is not altogether a misfortune that we should have our class feelings, our class points of view, that we should see certain aspects of things very vividly

and emphasize them strongly. A certain division of labour seems to be inevitable in thought as well as in action. But there is great danger lest these different points of view should harden into exclusive dogmas that make it impossible for us to understand each other. And it is of the highest importance that those who maintain them should be brought together so as to have a close and intimate perception of each other's feelings and thoughts. This is the best, perhaps the only adequate, prescription for enabling us to escape from ourselves, to get away from the idols of our own dens, and to correct our personal or class bias. It might even be maintained that we never thoroughly appreciate an opinion, especially if it is opposed to our usual way of thinking, and never thoroughly realize its force and meaning, till we meet with one who honestly maintains it.

A Civic Society may therefore do a great deal to help the development of sound and comprehensive ideas on social subjects, if it brings together men whose points of view are essentially different and enables them to understand each other. The first effect may indeed be only to show them how much they are opposed. But if they persist, each of them resolving fully and frankly to speak his own mind, and at the same time to tolerate and encourage the expression of opinions and arguments opposed to his own, however unsound he may think them, the gain may be great. Such discussion may prepare the way for a more comprehensive view of the questions discussed than previously existed in the mind of any of the disputants. For those who can discuss their opposition fairly are inevitably forced to recognize that there are reasons which might lead honest men to an

opposite view from their own, and to consider how far their own view is comprehensive enough to make room for them. They can no longer hold that all the sheep are on the one side, and all the goats on the other. They are forced in some points to make admissions to their opponents, and, if they do not convince each other, yet they make it possible for themselves, or at least for more impartial minds, to see the questions on all sides and to seek for a solution that does justice to them all.

By way of illustration of what I mean, I should like shortly to refer to a great controversy in regard to social and economical subjects of which we have heard much in recent years and are likely to hear more in the future, the controversy between Individualism and Socialism, and to point out what progress has been made towards an understanding between the opposite parties. Before, however, entering upon the special question, I should like to make one general remark. It has been said that the present age is an age of criticism and reconciliation, as contrasted with previous ages which were given up to the war of opposing dogmatisms. And undoubtedly it is a marked characteristic of our time that in many departments of thought it has broken through lines of division which were formerly supposed to be absolute. If we look back to the seventeenth, or even to the eighteenth century, we find that controversies as to religion or philosophy or politics were apt to take the form of a sharp and decisive collision of opposites between which no middle term was allowed to exist. Men were supposed to live mentally between the horns of a dilemma. Thus in religion they were called upon to choose between authority and reason, between a fixed

dogmatic system hallowed by all the sacred memories of the past, and the dictates of an individual understanding which emancipated itself from all control of tradition and regarded any reverence for it as superstitious. In philosophy they were asked to choose between a pure empiricism that recognized no power in the mind of man to do aught but accept what was given it from without through the senses, and a pure intuitionism which made that mind, at least as to its most fundamental ideas, entirely independent of experience. In like manner, in dealing with the history of religions, it was assumed that if Christianity was true, it must contain all religious truth without any alloy, and that if other religions were in comparison false, they must contain nothing but lying and imposture.

Now, the same way of thinking prevailed also in the sphere of politics and social philosophy, and determined the course of the controversy between Individualism and Socialism. On the one side many voices asserted the doctrine of unfettered freedom for the individual, the doctrine that the one way to good economical and social results was to remove all restrictions, all social pressure, all limits upon individual opinion or action. Godwin even tried to demonstrate that nature of itself would bring men to goodness and happiness, if only the unnatural restraints of law were removed; and Shelley, in melodious verse, proclaimed the absolute purity of natural impulse, and echoed the dogma that the one source of all evil is the policeman. Even those who did not take such an optimistic view of the results of freedom, held that restraint upon competition between individuals is always an evil, or that if it brings disasters

with it, yet these are never so bad as the effects of any restriction of it or interference with it. On the other side, in opposition to this glorification of *Laissez faire*, there arose an equally abstract Socialism which regarded competition as essentially evil, as the exploitation of the weak by the strong ; which declared private property to be theft, and even denounced the exclusive personal relations of the family as unsocial ; which therefore maintained that the only safety for society must lie in establishing a fixed order, in which all private initiative was suppressed ; and that the individual must be reduced into an instrument of the community which should compel him to work according to his capacity, and reward him according to his wants. Thus the one system seemed to deny that society could do anything for the individual, except to refuse to interfere with him, and allow him to compete or co-operate with his fellows as he pleased ; while the other viewed him as a creature of society, who is only what society makes him, and can never be allowed safely to escape from its despotic beneficence. Such was the frank dogmatic Socialism which writers like Fourier and Owen opposed to the equally dogmatic enthusiasts of *Laissez faire* even up to the beginning of this century.

Now, I think I may venture to say that no such Socialism and no such Individualism exists in the mind of any tolerably educated man at the present day. There are many who cling to the names of Individualism or Socialism, but there are none, or almost none, who maintain the simple abstract doctrines once associated with them. And there is much of what I can only describe as an unconscious tendency to *hedge* among the partizans of either side. Thus there are many

writers who will tell you that a *true* Individualism is one which allows much room for the action of society, especially through the State and the Municipality; and not merely *negative* action in the way of protecting person and property, but also positive action in measures to further the health, the comfort, the moral and intellectual education, and even the recreation of the people. And on the other side, there are not a few who call themselves socialists who altogether repudiate communism and tell us that for a *true* or scientific Socialism "the criterion of economic machinery is simply, Does it or does it not make for a greater amount and quality of life and character" in the individuals of which the society is composed? These are the words of Mr. Sidney Ball in a tract recently published as an expression of the views of the Fabian Society. Mr. Ball goes on to say, "The older Socialism rested upon such ideas as 'the right to live,' 'the right to work,' 'payment according to needs,' the denial of 'the rent of ability,' 'expropriation without compensation,' 'minimizing' or 'materializing' of wants—all ideas of retrogressive rather than of progressive 'selection.' But it would not be too much to say that all these ideas are either silently ignored or expressly repudiated by the modern Socialism: the 'ideology' of the older socialists has given way to a deliberately, and in some ways rigidly, scientific treatment of life. "Modern Socialism recognizes the laws of social growth and development in setting itself against catastrophic impossibilism and the manufacture of mechanical Utopias; it recognizes the moral continuity of society in its consideration for vested interests; it does not base industrial organization on the 'right to work' so much as on the

'right of the worker,' not on 'payment according to needs' so much as on 'payment according to services'; it recognizes the remuneration of ability, provided that the ability does not merely represent a monopoly of privileged and non-competitive advantage; it is aware of the utility of capital without making the individualist's confusion between the employment of capital and the ownership of it; it is not concerned about the inequality of property, except so far as it conflicts with sound national economy; it does not desire so much to minimize as to rationalize wants, and attaches the utmost importance to the qualitative development of consumption; and finally, not to enumerate more distinctly economic developments, it recognizes 'the abiding necessity for contest, competition, and selection,' as means of development, when it presses for such an organization of industry as shall make selection according to ability and character the determining factor in the remuneration of labour."¹

Now, while I appreciate highly these attempts on each side to correct the one-sided dogmas of an earlier time, and while I am quite prepared to admit and to maintain that in a sense a true Socialism and a true Individualism must be one, I would urge, in the interest of fair discussion and clear thinking, that neither of them can be permitted to appropriate without acknowledgment whatever elements it thinks good from the adversary, while still insisting on the purity of its own doctrine and keeping up all the severity of its former censures upon that adversary. If we oppose Socialism and Indi-

¹ "The Moral Basis of Socialism"; *International Journal of Ethics*, 1896. Reprinted as *Fabian Tract*, No. 72, p. 4.

vidualism as abstract principles, we must take the latter as the assertion of the unlimited freedom of the individual to compete or co-operate with his fellow as he pleases, and we must take the former as the absolute negation of such freedom and the reduction of the individual under the control of society, to the exclusion of individual initiative. Logically carried out, the one can be nothing less than anarchism and the other social despotism. Neither of these systems, indeed, has ever been actually realized, though there have been approximations to the system of Individualism in communities where the State was very weak or very limited in the sphere of its action ; and there have been approximations to the system of Socialism in some communities of a primitive kind in which the idea of individual right had not yet arisen, as well as in some smaller societies (which were not States but special organizations within the State), such as the monasteries, or the various socialistic experiments which are now being tried in the United States. To realize the full working out of socialistic or individualistic principles, therefore, we must go, on the one side, to the ideal Commonwealth of Plato or the various Utopias which have been constructed by More and his successors down to Morris with his *News from Nowhere* ; and, on the other hand, to the descriptions of the state of nature in Rousseau and Diderot and Godwin.

Setting aside pure Individualism and pure Socialism as abstractions, we find many halting places between the two modifications of socialistic or individualistic systems, which rest really, though not confessedly, on the plan of borrowing whatever elements seemed desirable from the opposite system. Thus the earliest and best

known of the compromises of Individualism is that which has been epigrammatically characterized as 'anarchy plus a street constable,' the theory which would give to the State the duty of protecting the rights of person and property, and then leave everything else to the action of individuals. But there are hardly any individualists who hold to this limitation of State action now. Almost every one who has a right to be heard would admit that, as a nation, we must deal with pauperism, though there are of course many views as to the best kind of Poor Law. Almost every one admits that there are some general services, such as the Post Office, which it is expedient that the State should perform for the community, and that there are a number of natural monopolies which the State, the Municipality, or some public authority must either take into its own hands, or at least regulate and control. And almost every one admits that the State must concern itself with the great business of education, either directly and continually, or by occasional interferences with the independent authorities in whose hands the management of it is left. And though the limits of municipal action are still a matter of controversy, I should be surprised if there are many Glasgow individualists who do not approve of a considerable part of that which the Municipality has done for its citizens.

On the other hand, we find that the simple communistic principle, which rests on the annihilation of all rights of person and property and also on the suppression of the family, has been very greatly modified in modern Socialism. Almost all modern systems have introduced the principle that the reward of the individual's labour must have respect to the service done by him to the

community, and not merely to his wants; almost all have admitted within certain limits the necessity of allowing him to acquire private property, even when they refuse to let him use it as capital. And, although the language of socialists in relation to the family is still very uncertain, there are among those who call themselves by that name many who recognize that a pure domestic life and the sanctity of the home are the indispensable basis of the moral as well as the economical organization of society. And if we can take Mr. Sidney Ball, who speaks for the Fabian Society, as our authority, the modification of the socialistic system has gone much farther. Mr. Ball indeed cautiously says that the "Fabian Society has *for the most part* sown its wild oats,"¹ so that perhaps we may expect farther developments when the whole crop of wild oats has been sown. But already his Socialism is one which fully recognizes the remuneration of ability and the inequality of property, "except so far as it conflicts with equality of opportunity and equality of consideration for all social workers," and it admits also the "abiding necessity for conflict, competition, and the natural selection" which arises out of such competition—regarding these as essential means to development of individuals who shall be true members of the social organism, and not a pauperized proletariat who must be a continual hindrance to its progress. His Socialism, therefore, consists almost entirely in his holding that all capital, *i.e.* all the funds employed in carrying on the various industries of the country, should be administered by some public authority, which should supersede the employer or 'undertaker.' Furthermore,

¹ *International Journal of Ethics*, 1896.

he, with many of the most thoughtful of the Socialists, has entirely renounced the purpose of realizing this ideal by any sudden revolution, and has acknowledged that the State, and public authorities generally, are at present entirely unfitted to take upon themselves the general administration of capital, and that they can only become so by a long process of social education. In short, such socialists look upon their own scheme, not as a project for immediate realization, but as a goal towards which modern society is tending—a goal, we may add, which it cannot reach until the character and capacity necessary for its realization have been developed. And they are content in the meanwhile to work, through County Councils, School Boards, and Poor Law Authorities, as well as through Parliament, for such partial improvements of the condition of the people as from time to time seem to become possible.

After this review I think I may venture to say that it is altogether a mistake to think that at the present time individualists and socialists generally stand to each other as absolutely opposed sects, holding reciprocally exclusive dogmas, and unable to make any concessions to each other. There are, of course, now as always, men on both sides who are incapable of seeing that a question has more than one aspect, and who ride their favourite abstraction to death, or perhaps, we should rather say, are ridden to death by it. And there are many who think abstractly, simply because of want of education, or of that practical knowledge of the problems of social life and the difficulties of solving them, which can be acquired only in direct contact with affairs. But with the exception of these prophets or victims of one idea, there are no such

beings as pure socialists or pure individualists. "We are all socialists now," an eminent person is reported to have said. And I think that with equal approximation to truth it might be said that "we are all individualists now." There are few men who think seriously upon such topics, who do not realize in some degree that we can help individuals effectively only by enabling them to help themselves, by drawing out their individual energy and resolution. And there are few who do not see that it is impossible to do this without giving to the individual a control over his own earnings, without opening to him a career in which he can be useful to himself and to society, and, on the other hand, without allowing him to suffer by his own idleness or improvidence. Nor are there many now who think that society would be benefited if the individual was deprived of the right of having a home of his own, in which he may enjoy the highest blessing of life, the blessing of the household union of husband and wife and children; or if he were relieved from the responsibilities of maintaining those he has brought into the world, and to the best of his power preparing them for the duties of life. That is the *essential truth of Individualism*, which Aristotle long ago maintained against the socialistic proposals of Plato.

On the other hand, it is as true now as it was for Aristotle and Plato, that man is essentially a social and political animal, that the individual apart from the community is like a hand cut off from the living body; that the savage 'war of all against all' is ruin, and that unlimited competition is little better: that the State, comprehending in itself all municipal and other partial organs of its activity, is the great organization upon

which the welfare of all is dependent, and that it is its duty, not only to protect the private rights of individuals, but to control and modify the action of all individuals and classes, so that, so far as may be, they may work together for the good of the whole community; and further, to take upon itself every public service which can be more effectively discharged by itself than by the independent action of individuals. This is the *essential truth of Socialism*, which has been too much forgotten, but which no community can forget without danger.

If we look upon this picture and upon that, we see that the opposition of individualists and socialists is now becoming confined within narrow limits, and that there is no such difference of principle between them that they should find it difficult to discuss any practical question. They agree very closely in their ideal. For what socialists, or the most thoughtful of them, now profess to want is that the State should protect individuals from that hurtful and destructive competition which means the crushing of the weak by the strong; that it should do its utmost to promote the growth of individual energy and character, and to give every one a fair chance of living a healthful and useful life; but that it should do nothing to pauperize men by charity, to weaken their personal responsibility for their own lives, or to stop that healthful competition which draws out capacity and character, and determines in what position the individual can best serve the community. On the other side, individualists, if they watch narrowly and anxiously the encroachments of the State or the Municipality upon any sphere of the public service hitherto left to individual enterprise, base their opposition on the

admitted dangers of any attempt to do for individuals what they ought to do, and can effectually do, only for themselves, and they no longer deny that there are many services—how many is the question—in which it is expedient that public should supersede private action.

Now, I do not say that it is indifferent from which side of the question we take it up, or that we can expect to escape great controversy and conflict between the two parties. But I do say that there is no antagonism of principle between them such as was formerly supposed to exist, and such as should prevent an ultimate agreement being arrived at by discussion and the careful questioning of experience. Their difference as to the form which society is likely to assume in the future, when the changes now going on have borne their last fruit, and especially the question as to the extent which society will undertake the regulation or conduct of industry, is, no doubt, theoretically very important. But it is not an irreconcilable difference. For it is admitted on the one hand, that the public authority *ought* to take into its hand such services as it can discharge more efficiently and economically than private individuals; and, again, that it *must* do all it can to help the poor and strengthen the weak, and to give every one born in the community opportunities for the education and the development of his powers, and to open a free career to his talents when they have been developed; and it is admitted, on the other hand, that in securing such ends it must be careful above all not to lay too heavy burdens on the community, such burdens as might check the growth of its resources and break down the independence of its poorer members; and

finally, it is confessed, at least by the most reasonable men on both sides, that no attempt to change the economic conditions of life by a sudden revolution can be effectual; nay, that any such attempt would be certain to bring economic and social ruin by throwing upon the State and the subordinate public authorities functions which they are not prepared to discharge. Starting from these admissions on each side, we may fairly say that the opposition between them reduces itself to a difference as to the ultimate result of the gradual evolution through which society is now passing—a point upon which no one has a right to speak very dogmatically; and what is really more important, both parties are able to discuss with each other on common grounds the expediency of each particular measure which is proposed. For though they may look upon it from opposite points of view, yet each must confess to a certain extent the legitimacy of the point of view of the other, and there is no practical consideration which one can allege which the other is precluded by his principles from considering with judicial fairness.

Now, it may be said, that in the preceding remarks I have exaggerated the actual approximation of the two parties, that I have made too much of the concessions of a few of their most reasonable or conciliatory members on each side, and that I have not paid sufficient regard to the violent utterances that come from Conferences of Socialists on the one side, and to the uncompromising assertions of the representatives of Leagues for the defence of Liberty and Property on the other. But I venture to think that the real drift of opinion is not permanently affected by partizan vehemencies, and that there is a great and growing force of thought and ex-

perience which is steadily beating down the noise of
 faction, and gaining ground for wider and more com-
 prehensive views. 'The mills of God grind slowly, but
 they grind exceeding small.' Ideas win their way by
 inches and very silently, but what ground they win is
 never lost. And the great idea which rules the mind
 of this age, the idea of organic evolution, is surely
 leading us away from the 'falsehood of extremes.' The
 power of this idea is unquestionable. It has already
 transformed, or is transforming, all our scientific con-
 ceptions. In particular, it has already revolutionized the
 biological sciences: it has given a new meaning to History,
 and it is rapidly remoulding our Economics and creating a
 new kind of ethical and political and social science. Now,
 the idea of evolution is a *reconciling idea*, which enables
 us to do justice to both the aspects of social life which
 have been opposed in the past, and to rise above their
 opposition. Thus, let us take the formula of evolution
 which Mr. Herbert Spencer has given, that it is a *pro-*
gress at once in differentiation and integration, or, less
 technically, a progress towards the division of labour
 and the independence of the parts, and at the same
 time towards their co-operation and the unity of the
 whole. Apply this idea to society, and what does it
 mean? It means something which we hope the future
 of society may one day realize, it means the utmost
 development of individual capacity, the utmost strength-
 ening of individual independence, and at the same
 time a close interdependence and connection of all the
 individuals with each other, such that the common good
 of society shall evoke the greatest devotion on the part
 of all the members of it. And it means that these two

ends are not opposed, but essentially one, so that it is impossible for a society to be strong, if its members are weak, or for the members to be strong, except through the same means which secure the greatest material and moral unity of the society. The division of labour is in order to the co-operation of labour, and that co-operation cannot be complete, unless the life of the whole is present in every part, unless each individual feels and realizes in all his work that he is the organ of the community. And, on the other hand, a truly organic society cannot be made except out of independent, self-respecting, self-governing individuals. Division without such union is on the way to death by disintegration; unity without such independence is on the way to death by paralysis. To pursue the one end in opposition to the other is to sacrifice both.

It is true that a different interpretation has sometimes been given to the idea of evolution. In his great work on the *Origin of Species*, Darwin, following Malthus, pointed to the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest as essential to the development of vegetable and animal life; and there have been many ready to draw the inference that in human life the only security for progress is unrestricted competition. But already, in his earliest book, Darwin had pointed out, though he did not emphasize the fact, that this competition of individuals is limited and controlled by powerful sexual and parental instincts, which bind individuals together so that they do *not* compete; and in a later book he directly put forward the principle of sexual selection as almost co-ordinate with his original principle. In fact, it might be said that if the animals carry out the principle of

competition in its extremest form, yet, on the other hand, there are no such rigid socialists as they, none who carry out the sacrifice of individuals to the common good with such remorseless thoroughness as, *e.g.*, the bees and the ants. And when we turn to mankind, Darwin himself showed that it is the very condition of human existence that competition should be not between individuals, but between societies, and that within each society competition between individuals should be subordinated to the common good. And if we were to trace out the evolution of man in history, we should find that if, on the one hand, it has tended to the emancipation of individuals from direct social pressure—tended to make them more and more independent, and so to enable them to compete more freely—yet, at the same time, every step in civilization has been a step toward the limitation of the worst form of competition, which is war, and also of the next worst form of competition, which is fraud and the exploitation of the weak by the strong; and a step towards the introduction of a form of competition which is only the natural process whereby the individual is pressed up or down, till he finds his proper place—the place in which he can best serve the community. We are, indeed, far from the realization of a community in which these ends are even approximately attained. We have much of the wrong kind of competition — that which determines the position of individuals by the simple law of battle; and, side by side with it, as the necessary correlative of it, we have much of the bad kind of Socialism, in which charity and help are given to individuals by society or by other individuals in a partial and unjust way—in a way that

weakens rather than strengthens those to whom it is given: and also much industrial co-operation which degrades the individual. And we have to allow for the fact that the advance is not made in a direct line towards the ideal, but rather with much swaying from side to side, action and reaction being distributed over considerable periods of time. Thus the excess of the movement of the last century towards the emancipation of the individual, which resulted in breaking the semi-feudal bonds of society, has been compensated in this century by a movement towards the restoration of social unity and the re-assertion of the claims of society upon the individual. But what I am interested here to show is, that the idea of the organic evolution of society is equally opposed to both, and that it is gradually teaching all who think seriously and who try by its means to interpret the lessons of experience, to repudiate both, and to accept—as the ideal towards which we are inevitably, if with such painful slowness, tending—the ideal of a society which shall neither enslave men in order to unite them, nor break the bonds of humanity that knit them to each other in order to set them free.

Before concluding these remarks I should like to refer to one other point in which the idea of organic evolution is gradually but irresistibly lifting us above abstract and one-sided ways of thinking. It may safely be said that before this century the conditions of historical progress were very imperfectly understood. Those who wished for a better state of things generally hoped and expected it to be brought about, if it was brought about at all, by some sudden and revolutionary change of the fundamental institutions of society. Plato, the first great political idealist, met the question how his ideal was to

be realized with the answer, that it would be realized only by the advent of some great philosopher-king, *i.e.* by the coming of some legislative leader of men, who should destroy at a stroke the imperfect institutions of the past, and lay the foundations of a new society on scientific principles. And it is easy to see that similar expectations were entertained by many at the time of the Puritan revolution in this country, and still more at the beginning of the French revolution. Men believed that, if they could remove those evils which they had inherited, a far better order of things could without much difficulty be established. But in both cases it was found that the work of destroying was easy, but the work of rebuilding supremely hard. This is the more remarkable in the case of the English revolution, because the immediate result of it was, in a sense, to set up a philosopher-king—to raise to the highest position a man of great political genius, whose ideas on religious freedom, on the education of the people, and on the constitution of parliament as a representative assembly, anticipated many reforms which have only been realized in the present century. But Cromwell, great as were his achievements, found himself quite unable to raise the nation to the level of such institutions; and the immediate consequence of his premature attempts was a reaction of despair and a recurrence to the government of the Stuarts, which was the beginning of what we may call the most un-ideal period of English history. The seed of the future had been planted, but it took two centuries to grow to maturity. For it was impossible to make men free by setting up the institutions of freedom. What was needed was to create in the whole nation the spirit that could

work such institutions, and that could not be done by any direct action of the law. Hence so often revolution is followed by reaction. "Raw haste is half-sister to delay," and the eagerness that would not wait for the process of growth is compensated by a far longer period of despondency and waiting than would otherwise have been necessary.

I remember that in this city I once had the opportunity of listening to a very eminent socialist lecturer giving his description of what he conceived to be the ideal of social and economical organization, giving us in short 'Good news from Nowhere,' and I remember that, after the lecture, a working man—who must have been a good Scottish Calvinist—asked the lecturer whether he thought that, *if* the new ideal order of things was introduced to-morrow, the depravity of human nature would not begin soon to undermine it. The lecturer's answer I cannot exactly recall, but it practically amounted to this, that the depravity of human nature was in the main due to bad institutions, and that in the new order of things every one would be so well satisfied with his lot that no such recoil need be feared. Alas! if one's hope for the future depended on the possibility of satisfying the insatiable desires of man, it would be the hope of filling the sieve of the Danaides. That hope must lie in a progressive amelioration of institutions going along with the development of a higher social morality, and of a willingness and capacity in individuals to undertake the higher civic duties and responsibilities which such institutions bring. Improvement of institutions is useful only when it is due to the effort to make channels for new energies of individuals, who are at the same time

conditions and make them the means of developing a better kind of life in himself. Within our own time circumstances have altered more rapidly than in any previous generation. The world, so to speak, has been drawing close together and becoming one instead of many worlds. Not many years ago nations carried on their lives almost in separation, or were connected only at one or two points of contact. But now every strong influence passes rapidly from one nation to another. The discovery of the laws of nature and the invention of ways in which such discoveries may be turned to the uses of man, are carried on by the continuous co-operation of men of science throughout the world, and every movement of artistic or scientific thought spreads unhindered by any difficulties of communication. The movements of trade and commerce have become cosmopolitan, so that waves of elevation and depression pass over the globe, involving the success or ruin to the thousands who had nothing to do with their origination. The horizon of politics has widened, so that the ebb and flow of reforming or conservative influences in every nation become part of one great movement. And we can see that these causes will go on operating in still more decisive ways in the future, till it shall become impossible to avoid a kind of co-operation and even union of all nations, of which we now see only the beginnings.

Now, I mention these obvious facts, because, as I have already said, the problem of the modern world is *to turn these necessities into freedom*. It is, in other words, to make them the means of improving our lives, instead of allowing them to crush us. We cannot, *e.g.*, prevent

